Deputy AG defends Mueller

No cause to fire him over 2 FBI agents' texts, official says. – National, 3A

Cleaner air with a price tag

China's war against smog is raising cost of energy around world. – Business, 1D

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

ARKANSAS' NEWSPAPER

Copyright © 2017, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Inc.

Printed at Little Rock • December 14, 2017 ArkansasOnline.com 98 Pages • 11 Sections $1.00

GOP frames single tax bill

Leaders aim to close rifts, speed it on

AP/J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (left) and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady celebrate Wednesday after reaching agreement on a tax overhaul plan.

DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — Congressional Republicans on Wednesday sped forward with the most sweeping tax rewrite in decades, announcing an agreement in principle on a final bill that would cut taxes for businesses and individuals and mark the party's first major legislative achievement since assuming political control this year.

Party leaders in the House and Senate agreed to bridge the yawning gaps between their competing versions of the $1.5 trillion tax bill, keeping Republicans on track for final votes next week with the aim of delivering a bill to President Donald Trump's desk by Christmas.

"Let's not waver now — let's not give in to the Washington status quo — not when tax reform is so close," said Rep. Kevin Brady, R-Texas, chairman of the tax-writing House Ways

See **TAXES**, Page 7A

View rosy, Fed lifts interest rate

Yellen cites economy's vigor

AP/CAROLYN KASTER

Fed Chairman Janet Yellen said Wednesday in Washington that the U.S. economy has been doing well. "There's less to lose sleep about now than has been true for quite some time," she said.

HEATHER LONG
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve lifted its benchmark interest rate on Wednesday by a quarter-point to a range of 1.25 percent to 1.5 percent, a widely expected move that the central bank said is happening because America's economy continues to improve. This is the fifth rate increase since the bank cut the rate to nearly zero during the financial crisis of 2008.

The Fed cast the decision as a positive signal that the U.S. economy is healthy. "The labor market has continued to strengthen" and "economic activity has been rising at a solid rate," the Fed said in a statement.

Unemployment is now at the lowest level since 2000, growth is picking up, and inflation remains tame. The Fed bumped up its expec-

See **FED**, Page 8A

$40M donation to boost visual arts at UA

Windgate foundation helping to build artistic district near Fayetteville campus

JAIME ADAME
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

FAYETTEVILLE — A $40 million gift from the Windgate Charitable Foundation will pay for new arts facilities at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

The largest single grant made by the foundation in its history provides another boost to UA's art school after the August announcement of a $120 million gift from the Walton Charitable Family Support Foundation.

"I think really, decades from now, fall of 2017 will be recognized as a watershed moment in the advancement of the arts for this state," Chancellor Joe Steinmetz said.

The latest gift will allow for development of the Windgate Art and Design District, envisioned as a cluster of arts facilities in south Fayetteville, a few blocks from the main UA campus.

Over the past five years, the Siloam Springs-based Windgate Charitable Foundation has given out about $105 million in support of the arts in Arkansas, said John Brown III, the foundation's executive director.

Recent in-state gifts include a $20.3 million grant for a new arts building at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and $15.5 million for an arts building at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith.

The family foundation also has given out millions more in grants outside the state since its founding in 1993. Brown said the influx in funding provides an opportunity for UA's School of Art.

"We think the University of Arkansas can become a

See **ARTS**, Page 8A

In the news

■ **Calvin Baldwin** of Boutte, La., said his dog, Rusty, started scratching at his arm to wake him up during a morning fire, allowing him to grab the dog and escape the flames and smoke that engulfed his house.

■ **Sandra McClung**, 75, attacked and robbed of a loaf of bread while using a mobility scooter outside an Atlanta-area Wal-Mart earlier this year, hopes that newly released security camera photos will help police identify the woman who repeatedly punched her.

■ **Sara Goldrick-Rab**, a professor at Temple University in Philadelphia, is donating the $100,000 prize she won for her research into the rising cost of college to a fund she established to help students cope with financial emergencies not covered by traditional aid.

■ **Nick Moore**, a doctor at Glenfield Hospital in Leicester, England, said Vanellope Wilkins, who was born with her heart outside her body, is in the pediatric intensive-care unit after surviving three surgeries, including one within an hour of her birth to place her heart into her chest cavity.

■ **Catherine Curtin**, a Tulsa County, Okla., sheriff's deputy, is being praised for her decision, while facing a knife-wielding man, to put her firearm away and instead use her stun gun to subdue the 60-year-old, who later said he was trying to provoke a police shooting.

■ **Don Epps**, a high school principal in Diamond, Mo., said residents who were upset when vandals torched the school's snowman made of hay bales replaced it with two snowmen, one made of metal and the other made of silage and materials salvaged from the fire.

■ **Adrian Allison**, a school superintendent in Canton, Ohio, said a 48-year-old high school teacher was suspended with pay after a cellphone video surfaced showing him wrapping his arm around a student's neck and taking the teen to the floor inside a classroom.

■ **Mark Stetter**, 48, of Buffalo, N.Y., who sought a coffee shop discount by claiming he was a detective and flashing a fake badge and what turned out to be a BB gun, was charged with impersonating a police officer and other counts, authorities said.

■ **Ali Baydoun**, 52, of Dearborn Heights, Mich., pleaded guilty to conspiring with a brother and a nephew to pay $150,000 in bribes to suburban Detroit officials to obtain a permit for a medical-marijuana dispensary, federal prosecutors said.

AP/JOHN BAZEMORE

Doug Jones said Wednesday in Birmingham that he had "a very gracious" phone call with President Donald Trump in which he congratulated Jones on his Senate victory and invited him to the White House.

Alabama loss relief and worry for GOP

Moore blot gone; so is Senate seat

COMPILED BY DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF FROM WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — As Democrats celebrated a Senate win in Alabama, Republicans picked through the wreckage Wednesday after a blow that showcased voter backlash to sexual-misconduct allegations and the limits of President Donald Trump's political influence.

And the GOP's legislative agenda was in limbo as questions swirled over when Democrat Doug Jones would be sworn in and how that timing would affect party goals such as a tax overhaul.

Trump said Wednesday that Roy Moore's loss was not his preferred outcome. He said he "would have liked to have had the seat" and an important Senate vote as GOP lawmakers scratch for legislative victories.

But he also acknowledged, "A lot of Republicans feel differently. They feel very happy about the way it turned out."

Indeed, many establishment-minded Republicans, in and out of Washington, cheered Moore's loss as the impact of the surprise Democratic win in long-Republican Alabama echoed throughout the political world. The prospect of a high-profile Republican

See **ALABAMA**, Page 5A

FRANKEN TO be replaced by Minnesota lieutenant governor. Page 4A.

ARKANSANS from both sides react to outcome. Page 5A.

RACE FOR state House seat inspired by Alabama vote. Page 1B.

WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK
Today Mostly sunny and cool.
High 48, northeast winds at 5 to 10 mph.
Tonight Clouds decreasing.
Low 32.

INDEX

Arkansas	1B	Police beat	3B
Business	1D	Sports	1C
Classifieds	1F	Stocks	3D
Comics	6E	Style	1E
Crossword	6E	Television	2E
Deaths	4B	Voices	7B
Editorials	6B	Weather	4D

Home delivery
(501) 378-3456
Outside Pulaski County
1-800-482-1121

Arkansas singer Tharpe to join rock hall of fame

SEAN CLANCY
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

The "godmother of rock 'n' roll" has made her way to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Sister Rosetta Tharpe, the Cotton Plant native whose guitar playing and singing brought together the emotions of gospel and the gritty drive of early rock 'n' roll, was among the six inductees announced Wednesday by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. Others were Bon Jovi, The Cars, Dire Straits, the Moody Blues and Nina Simone.

Induction ceremonies will be April 14 at Public Hall in Cleveland.

Tharpe, a first-time nominee, will become the sixth Arkansan inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, joining Levon Helm of Phillips County, Louis Jordan of Brinkley, Al Green of Forrest City, Johnny Cash of Kingsland and Little Willie John of Cullendale.

Sister Rosetta

"It's decades overdue," said Stephen Koch, host of the *Arkansasongs* radio program where Tharpe's music is often featured. "She was like the Jimi Hendrix of her day, blowing people's minds with these guitar skills that seemed out of nowhere, from the future."

Tharpe's music loomed

See **THARPE**, Page 2A

Grappling over Jerusalem

AP/NASSER SHIYOUKHI

An undercover Israeli police officer detains a Palestinian demonstrator Wednesday in the West Bank city of Ramallah during a protest over President Donald Trump's stand on Jerusalem. At a meeting in Istanbul, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called for the United Nations to replace the United States as a Middle East mediator and said he might refuse to cooperate with Trump in negotiations for an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. *Article, 6A*